

# Senator Gary Siplin's District 19 Newsletter



February 1, 2012  
Issue No. 4



Dear Neighbors & Friends:

Thank you for allowing me to serve you in the Florida Senate. As the final days of my term in office come to an end, I want to utilize this newsletter to keep you abreast of the things that are occurring, both in Tallahassee and at home, that are of greatest importance to you.

~~~ God Bless, Gary

## School Prayer Bill Passes

Legislation that I sponsored, which will authorize school districts to adopt policies allowing student led inspirational messages or prayers at school events, passed out of the Florida Senate on Wednesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Senate Bill 98 was approved by the Florida Senate by a vote of 31-8. The legislation gives students complete discretion in deciding whether to include an inspirational message as a part of a student assembly as well as the content of the message.

This bill allows students an opportunity to further mature as students by exercising their freedom of expression through the delivery of inspirational messages without suppression or influence from school officials or any adults.

The bill is being sponsored in the Florida House of Representatives by Rep. Charles Van Zant, (R-Keystone Heights), and is currently waiting to be heard in committee. If you would like to help me restore spiritual inspiration to schools in this state, please contact your State Representatives and ask them to support House Bill 317.

If you need assistance determining who represents you in the Florida House of Representatives, contact my office at 407-297-2071.

### Senator Siplin's Upcoming Events

#### **2012 Legislative Session**

01.10 thru 03.10.2012  
Tallahassee, FL

#### **Legislative Updates with Seniors**

02.03.2012  
Meadow Lake Apartments  
Lorna Dune Apartments  
Orlando, FL

#### **2012 State of Black Florida Conference & Scholarship Gala**

02.08 thru 02.10.2012  
Tallahassee, FL

#### **Florida Innocence Commission Meeting**

2.13.2012  
Florida Supreme Court Building  
Tallahassee, FL

#### **Minority Business Enhancement Luncheon Series – Doing Business with Valencia College**

02.17.2011  
Valencia West Campus Special  
Events Center  
Orlando, FL

#### **Larry D. Hardaway Civil Liberties League Prayer Breakfast**

01.14.2011  
Lakeland, FL

#### **New Bethel AME Annual Men's Day**

02.26.2012  
Orlando, FL

## Pine Hills Celebrates Evans High

The Pine Hills community joined me on Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup> to celebrate the dedication of the NEW Evans High School. Hundreds showed up to christen the new school and to witness the genesis of the rejuvenation of the Pine Hills Community

The celebration began at 10am with the first parade to ever occur in Pine Hills. Over 70 agencies, organizations, churches, and youth groups participated in addition to statewide and local elected officials.

At the conclusion of the parade, participants joined us at the renovated Evans High School Football Stadium for a ceremony memorializing the day.

I would personally like to thank each and every one of you who made the Evans High School Parade and Dedication Ceremony the huge success that it was, and I encourage you to continue working with me to ensure that Pine Hills continues to flourish and grow.

If you have ideas or suggestions for increased community development or engagement in Pine Hills, please call or schedule a time to see me when I'm in Orlando.



## Redistricting Update

### Committee Assignments

Agriculture, Chair

Governmental Oversight & Accountability,  
Vice Chair

Higher Education, Vice Chair

Budget

Budget Subcommittee on Education  
PreK-12 Appropriations

Budget Subcommittee on Higher Education  
Appropriations

Reapportionment

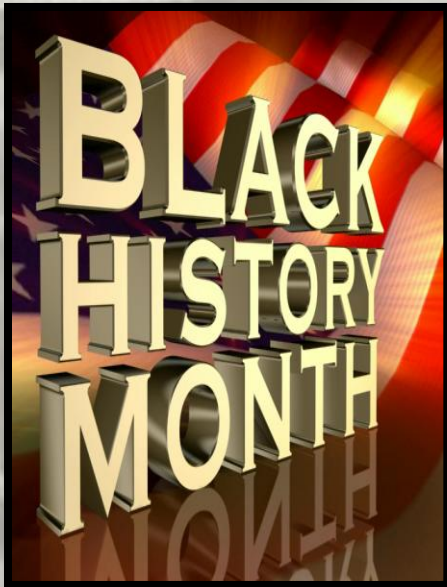
Regulated Industries

Rules

Joint Legislative Budget Commission

On Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup>, I was honored to host a Redistricting Panel Discussion to update my constituents on the status of the redistricting process on the Congressional, State, and Local levels. The event was a great success, and we even had C-SPAN to join us as part of their Campaign 2012 Tour. For those of you who weren't able to attend, here's a brief update:

- **Congressional & State Redistricting:** On Friday, February 3rd, the Florida House of Representatives passed three bills for Congressional, Senate, and House redistricting. The Senate will vote on passage of those bills during Week 6 of the Legislative Session, and the maps will then be presented to Attorney General Pam Bondi and the Florida Supreme Court for review.
- **Orange County Redistricting:** On March 15, 2011, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted a resolution to establish the Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC). This fifteen-member advisory committee was composed of residents and electors of the County and was tasked with reviewing the latest census data and submitting a proposed redistricting plan for the County commission districts for the BCC's consideration by October 1, 2011. A final redistricting map was adopted by the BCC on November 29, 2011, but the new district lines won't officially take effect on December 4, 2012.
- **City of Orlando Redistricting:** In October 2011, the City of Orlando's Redistricting Advisory Board unanimously approved a recommended redistricting plan from over 60 submissions. The following month, the City Council adopted the new districts. Officials state the adopted plan keeps existing boundaries largely intact.
- **Orange County Public Schools Redistricting:** On December 13, 2011, the Orange County Public Schools Reapportionment Advisory Committee (RAC) provided four proposals for consideration after 16 public meetings and three work sessions over a six month period. The school board reviewed the final four proposals in two work sessions before deciding on Proposal 13A with some additional changes and modifications. The school board district lines considered the geography of the neighborhoods, the current school attendance zones, and the demographics of Orange County while preserving communities of interests and avoiding the disqualification of any incumbent Board member for the duration of any term.



## Central Florida Black History Facts

To start off the recognition of the month of February as Black History Month, here are some Central Florida Black History Facts for your enlightenment:

### Paul C. Perkins

In 1965, Mayor Bob Carr appointed Paul C. Perkins to the position of City Prosecutor. He was the first African American in the state to hold that position. Perkins believed it was very important for African Americans to serve in the justice system so that other African Americans would be treated more equally. He later served as City Attorney and Judge for the City of Eatonville.

### Arthur "Pappy" Kennedy

In 1972, Arthur "Pappy" Kennedy became the first African American elected to the Orlando City Council. Born in River Junction, Florida, his family moved to Orlando where he attended Johnson Academy and Jones High School, then onto Bethune-Cookman College. Kennedy died in March 2000, but every year hundreds gather for a prayer breakfast in his honor.

### Dr. William Monroe Wells

One of Orlando's first black physicians, Dr. Wells came to the area in 1917. Born in Ft. Gaines, Georgia, in 1889, Dr. Wells completed his medical training at Meharry Medical College. During part of WWII, Dr. William Monroe Wells was the only African American physician in Orlando. With the help of his assistant, Mrs. Josie Belle Jackson, Dr. Wells is known to have delivered over 5,000 babies in Orlando.

## Contact Us

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